

POV  
FATALITIES  
THRU SEP FY 99  
124  
THRU SEP FY 98  
116

# ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION COUNTERMEASURE

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In this issue...

## FY99 POV Roll Call

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**SPECIAL POV PULL-OUT POSTERS INSIDE**

# ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION COUNTERMEASURE

## The Official Safety Magazine for Army Ground Risk-Management

**BG Gene M. LaCoste**  
Commander/Director of Army Safety

**COL John S. Warren**  
Deputy Commander

**LTC John D. Kirkland**  
Publishing Manager

**Paula Allman**  
Managing Editor

**Mike Wilkins**  
Graphics/Layout

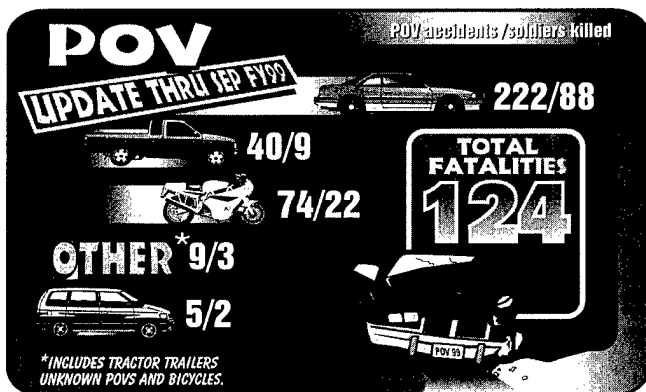
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*Due to this POV Special Issue having limited space, "You Make The Call" will be featured next month.*



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*Gene M. LaCoste*

Gene M. LaCoste  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Commanding Officer

## From the Editor

It's not a pretty picture. In FY 99, 124 soldiers were killed in car, truck, and motorcycle accidents. Automobiles have killed more soldiers than field exercises, tactical vehicles, or any other soldiering activity. Year after year, privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents account for almost three out of every five military fatalities.

### Why are soldiers dying in POVs?

Why, if soldiers are having fewer on-duty accidents, are we still losing them to off-duty POV accidents? Most importantly, what can we do to change these senseless losses? Somehow we must convince soldiers to take the risk management they apply to operating extremely demanding pieces of Army equipment and transition these lessons learned to operating their personal vehicle.

### What causes these accidents?

The foremost contributing factors to POV accidents are speed, fatigue, and alcohol.

**Speed.** While speed limits have been increased in many parts of the U.S., there is nothing to indicate that this change is a major factor in soldier POV fatalities. Rather, willful violations of the posted limit are suspect. Personal attitude and lack of self-discipline have a great effect on a person's likelihood to exceed the posted speed limit. Without a change in attitude and improvement in personal discipline, soldiers who speed when the limit is 55 will speed when the limit is 65. Additionally, driving the posted speed limit doesn't always mean you are driving at safe speed. Road conditions, weather, and the driver's level of alertness must be factored in to arrive at the safe speed.

**Fatigue.** Soldiers tend to start road trips after a long day at work. They also tend to go too far and wait too late to begin their return trip. Visits home and to recreation areas are usually jam-packed with activities, and the soldier often is already fatigued before the return-to-duty trip even begins. Then the pressure of getting back and signing in from leave or pass can cause even a normally good driver to skip rest stops and drive beyond his or her safe capabilities. Research shows a marked decrease in mental alertness after 2 hours of driving—even for fully

rested drivers. AR 385-55 recommends a 10-minute break after every 2 hours, but drivers must recognize that even with breaks, the effects of fatigue are cumulative, and the only sure cure is to stop and get some restorative sleep.

**Alcohol.** The Army is making progress on decreasing the incidence of DUI. The word is out that drinking and driving won't be tolerated. Yet, in spite of many effective tools such as designated driver programs, cards providing telephone numbers that soldiers can call for a ride if they have been drinking, and so forth, there are still POV accidents where alcohol is a factor.

**Seatbelts.** There is just no logical way to explain why soldiers don't use seatbelts. Nevertheless, accident reports make it clear that some don't. Statistics show over and over again that your seatbelt is a lifesaver — wear it! Furthermore, insist that everyone else in your vehicle does the same.

#### **Leader responsibility**

The closer you are to the soldiers in your command chain, the better you will know them.

Squad leaders and platoon sergeants know more about soldiers' driving habits than commanders. But awareness isn't enough. It is up to leaders at every level to take action to improve soldiers' driving habits and prevent accidents. This can range from awareness efforts and positive incentives, to recommending suspension or revocation of driving privileges if it becomes obvious that such action is needed.

Leader responsibility doesn't let individuals off the hook either. Each soldier must become involved in safety. Soldiers need to examine their own driving habits and look at ways to improve. Additionally, soldiers know when other soldiers drive irresponsibly. Remember, just as you wouldn't turn a blind eye if a fellow soldier were mishandling a tactical weapon, you can't do it when the weapon is a POV. Like it or not, you are your brother soldier's keeper — don't let someone you know be the next statistic. Believe me, it's not a pretty picture.

#### **SAFETY FIRST!**

**Paula**

## **Roll Call!**

**T**his issue of Countermeasure recounts the 124 soldiers who died in POV accidents in Fiscal Year 1999. Most of these fatalities cite the same causes of speed, fatigue, alcohol, traffic rule violations, and not wearing seatbelts over and over again. These are vivid testaments to the fact that there are no new causes, just new victims—year after year after year. Yet, just identifying hazards won't save a soldier's life...leader involvement is key in gaining control and stopping this tragic loss of life. If you need help in establishing a POV Safety Program, call us. Remember that your safety and well being are important to us here at the Safety Center, as well as the Army and our nation.

- PVT- 20 was driving while fatigued and exceeded the posted speed limit. Soldier lost control of her vehicle when she fell asleep at the wheel and ran off the roadway, striking a tree.
- SGT- 34 stopped his vehicle on shoulder of road to take a bathroom break when he was hit by another vehicle.
- SGT- 22 went through a red light and struck an 18-wheel truck.
- SPC- 22 was speeding back to post on his motorcycle when he hit a curb and was thrown from his bike.
- SPC- 27 was rear-ended by an 18-wheeler when he stopped to pick up a hitchhiker.
- PFC- 21 was speeding late at night when he hit a curb and lost control causing his vehicle to leave the road and strike a pole. His vehicle proceeded to hit a building causing the main gas line to explode.
- SPC- 21 was killed when he attempted to pass another vehicle and couldn't return to his lane. Vehicle was struck head-on. Both occupants were ejected from the vehicle.
- SPC- 20 attempted to pass another vehicle as it was making a left turn. Soldier's vehicle crashed, flipped several times, and landed in a ditch. Passengers, PFC-20 and PFC-19, also were fatally injured.
- SPC- 27 was hit head-on when another vehicle tried to pass a line of cars and failed to get back in correct lane. Soldier's entire family died in accident.
- SGM- 44 was traveling at a high rate of speed and attempted to change lanes and lost control of his vehicle. Soldier's vehicle ran off the road, struck a fence post, and then collided with a tree.

- PFC- 30 was hit head-on when the vehicle he was a passenger in veered into the opposite lane of traffic.
- SFC- 35 was traveling on a service road when a van crossed the centerline and ran head-on into his car.
- PFC- 19 was driving while fatigued. Soldier fell asleep and collided head-on with another vehicle.
- 2LT- 22 was struck head-on by an oncoming vehicle that had crossed the median into his lane.
- MSG- 49 struck a tree when his vehicle left the roadway. No seatbelt was used.
- CPT -28, a passenger in a car, was killed when the vehicle hydroplaned and struck another vehicle.
- PFC-21 was speeding on a wet roadway and lost control of his vehicle. Soldier's vehicle spun out of control and entered the opposite traffic lane where he was struck head-on. Alcohol was also a factor.
- Two soldiers, SGT- 31 and PFC-21, were killed when they crossed the centerline and collided with an oncoming vehicle. Fatigue was a factor.
- PFC-21 was speeding and lost control of his vehicle on a curve and overturned. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.
- SSG-31 was test-driving a motorcycle. As he entered the intersection, a car ran a stop sign and collided into him.
- SPC-24 rear-ended his motorcycle into a vehicle making a U-turn.
- LTC-39 was struck by an unattended commercial cement truck while walking to work.
- SGT-30 was traveling at a high rate of speed on his motorcycle when he attempted to pass a vehicle on the right side. Soldier's motorcycle collided with the vehicle when it made a right-hand turn.
- PV2-19 fell asleep at the wheel after leaving a late night party. Vehicle went off the bridge, incinerating on impact with the ground. His passenger, PV2-19, who was asleep in the back seat died also.
- SGT-32 was killed when his vehicle left the roadway, struck a telephone pole, flipped, ejected the soldier, and the vehicle landed on top of him. Alcohol, speed, and not wearing a seatbelt were factors.
- SPC-23 was on leave and traveling with her family. An oncoming vehicle crossed the centerline and hit soldier's vehicle head-on.
- SPC-21 lost control of his vehicle while passing a tractor-trailer on an icy road. Vehicle struck a guardrail, reentered the lane, and was struck by the 18-wheeler.

## AGE

17-22=57

23-26=24

27-30=17

31-35=11

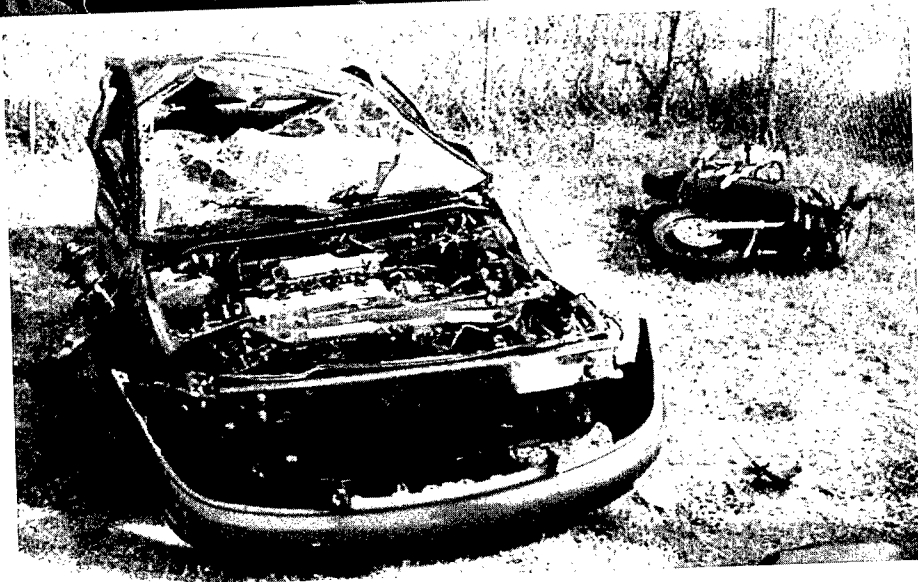
36-40=9

41-50=6

50+=0

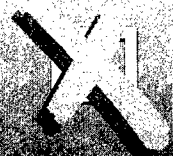
- PVT-18 was a passenger in a vehicle exceeding the posted speed limit. Vehicle lost control and struck a concrete pillar causing the vehicle to slide into a pole and brick wall.
- SPC-25 was a passenger in a vehicle that ran off the road, struck a wall, and overturned. Inattentive driving combined with excessive speed for road conditions (fog, dark, and slick roadways) were factors.
- PFC-28 was killed when his vehicle was struck from behind, causing his vehicle to strike a tree.
- SFC-47 hit a patch of black ice, lost control, and skidded into a tree and down an embankment.
- SPC-22 fell asleep at the wheel. Soldier's vehicle crossed the median, exited the roadway, and landed on its roof in water.
- PV2-20 was traveling with family when his vehicle was struck head-on by a drunk driver on New Year's Eve. Soldier's entire family was fatally injured.
- PV2-19 swerved to avoid a turning POV, lost control of his vehicle, and spun counterclockwise across both lanes of traffic and struck an oncoming truck.
- SSG-32 struck another vehicle while operating his motorcycle at over 100 mph.
- PVT-18 was en route to formation which had been postponed due to inclement weather. Soldier's vehicle skidded off icy roadway, struck a guardrail, struck another vehicle, and then struck an oncoming tractor-trailer.

# g Shots



YOUR FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM!

SPEED



NO SEATBELT/HELMET





In FY99, 124 soldiers died, not in combat,  
but in senseless POV accidents.

**DRIVE SAFELY!**



'til death do us part...



JOINT-SCORE

SEP

# Holiday



PHOTO: COURTESY OF ROAD & REC

**DON'T LET THESE END UP IN**

**'ALCOHOL**

**'FATIGUE**



- **PFC-21** was killed when she struck another vehicle.
- **SGT-22** was a passenger in a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. The driver failed to negotiate a curve and lost control of the vehicle, causing it to spin and collide with a dirt embankment.
- **PFC-25** fell asleep at the wheel while returning to base during early morning hours. Soldier's vehicle skidded onto right shoulder of road, and then he overcompensated and steered into an oncoming vehicle.
- **PVT-19** lost control of vehicle and struck a house. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from vehicle. Alcohol was involved.
- **SFC-37** fell asleep while driving and struck a concrete barrier.
- **SSG-27** lost control and fell off of his newly acquired motorcycle while trying to do a "wheelie." Soldier was not wearing a helmet.
- **CPT-27** received fatal injuries when his motorcycle was struck by a truck changing lanes.
- **SPC-28** struck a vehicle from behind while operating a motorcycle over 100 mph. The impact caused the motorcycle to erupt into flames.
- **PV2-18** was a passenger in a vehicle going 80 mph passing another vehicle. The driver lost control causing the vehicle to leave the roadway and hit a tree. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt. The other two soldiers were wearing their seatbelts and survived.
- **SPC-21** lost control of his vehicle, veered off the road, flipped, and struck an embankment after a tire blowout. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.
- **SPC-20** jumped out of a moving vehicle and was struck by another car. Alcohol was a factor.
- **PV2-19** received fatal injuries when the driver of the vehicle lost control, struck a guardrail, became airborne, and impacted a cement drainage ditch.
- **SPC-19** fell asleep while driving, drifted into the oncoming lane, and struck a tractor-trailer head-on.
- Two soldiers, **SFC-34** and **SFC-38**, were fatally injured when their speeding vehicle made a sharp left turn and hit the center median with the left front tire. The vehicle then turned sharply right and left the roadway. Both soldiers were thrown from the vehicle. Neither was wearing a seatbelt.
- **PFC-19** signed out on leave and was speeding to reach his destination. Vehicle hit the median and flipped several times. Soldier was ejected.
- **SSG-38** received fatal injuries when he was involved in a multiple car accident.
- **SPC-21** lost control of his motorcycle and struck a guardrail.
- **PFC-22** was exceeding the speed limit while driving intoxicated. In the early morning hour, soldier ran a red light, struck a median, and lost control of his vehicle. Vehicle rolled and flipped, ejecting soldier.
- **PFC-19** was struck head-on by a drunk driver driving the wrong way on a one-way street.
- **PV2-18** was a passenger in a vehicle that was traveling too fast for the rainy/snowy weather conditions. The driver lost control of the vehicle, hit a barbed-wire fence and rolled. Passenger was wearing only his shoulder belt and was ejected from the vehicle. Driver was wearing required seatbelts and received minor injuries.
- **SPC-27** lost control of his motorcycle and struck a concrete embankment. Soldier had not been licensed to operate a motorcycle.
- **CW4-41** failed to stop his motorcycle at a stop sign and collided with another vehicle.

## RANK

**PVT=8**

**PV2=11**

**PFC=29**

**SPC=33**

**SGT=13**

**SSG=13**

**SFC=7**

**MSG=2**

**SGM=1**

**CW4=2**

**2LT=1**

**CPT=2**

**LTC=2**

- SPC-21 was involved in a head-on collision with a tractor-trailer in the early morning hour.
- SFC-33 received fatal injuries when a mechanical failure caused him to lose control of his motorcycle.
- PFC-19 was speeding approximately 90 mph when he struck a parked tow truck.
- PV2-20 was hit by a vehicle while walking across a street on post.
- SPC-23 lost control of his vehicle while speeding and driving intoxicated.
- SPC-23 ran a red light and collided with another vehicle.
- SSG-28 was involved in a head-on collision while off-duty.

## CAUSES

### SPEED

43%

### FATIGUE

23%

### ALCOHOL

21%

### DRIVING SKILL\*

23%

### TRAFFIC RULE VIOLATION\*\*

24%

\* Includes Codes 1,2,6,9,12,13,  
17,42B,46,52,52C,53,54

\*\* Includes Codes 41,42,43,44,  
49,50,51

- SSG-29 fell asleep at the wheel and lost control of her vehicle, which veered into the median, rolled, and came to rest upright.

- SGT-25 was a passenger in a vehicle involved in a head-on collision in the early morning hours.

- SPC-24 was riding as a passenger in a car that the driver fell asleep at the wheel. The driver exited the roadway and struck a rock embankment causing the vehicle to flip and land on the passenger side roof.

- SSG-45 fell asleep at the wheel and struck a guardrail.

- PVT-23 lost control of his vehicle and traveled into the center median where it overturned several times. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.

- Two soldiers, PFC-18 and PFC-19, sustained fatal injuries when the driver fell asleep at the wheel and crossed into oncoming traffic and collided head-on. They were driving home from a night of socializing in nightclubs and both had been drinking.

- PFC-21 received fatal injuries when the motorcycle he was a passenger on crashed into a large pine tree, throwing both riders from the bike. He was not wearing a helmet.

- PFC-22 and SGT-23 were killed when their vehicle collided with another moving vehicle. Both vehicles caught fire.

- SPC-21 was traveling too fast for road/weather conditions and lost control of her vehicle on a curve. The vehicle left the highway, struck an embankment, overturned, and then struck a tree.

- PFC-18 lost control of his vehicle, crossed the median into oncoming traffic, and struck a semi-truck head-on.

- PFC-23 was speeding and did not slow down going into a curve, lost control of his vehicle, hit a pole, and then rolled several times. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.

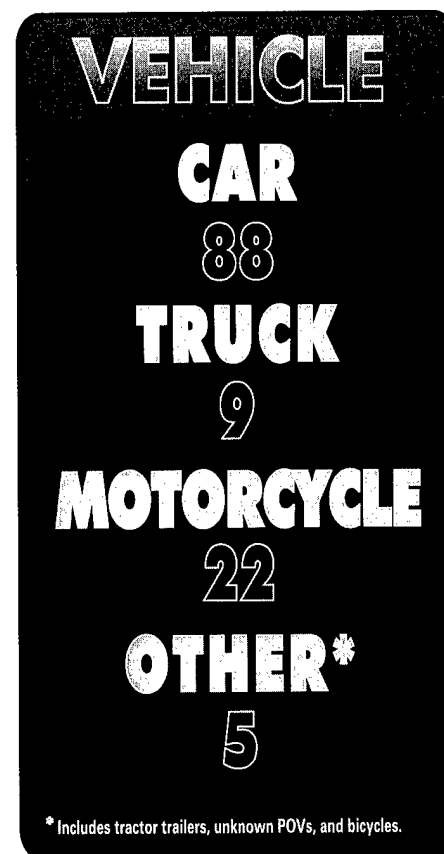
- LTC-41 was a passenger in a car that was hit broadside by a vehicle failing to stop at a stop sign.

- PFC-18 lost control of his vehicle and drove off a cliff. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.

- PFC-20 was a passenger in a vehicle in which the driver was under the influence of alcohol and traveling at a high rate of speed. The vehicle crashed into a tree and fence after failing to negotiate a curve.

- SPC-20 fell asleep at the wheel in the early morning hour. The vehicle struck a culvert, went airborne, and hit a palm tree.

- PVT-23 crossed both lanes of traffic, proceeded off the road, flipped, and struck a tree.
- PV2-21, a passenger not wearing a seatbelt, was fatally injured when the driver became fixated on the emergency lights of the tow truck parked on the side of the road, resulting in the vehicle veering off the road and hitting the tow truck. Alcohol, speed, and fatigue were factors in this accident.
- SPC-24 was hit while attempting to cross an interstate highway on foot. The vehicle never stopped.
- SFC-39 was hit head-on when a semi tractor-trailer crossed over the centerline and struck his vehicle.
- SSG-32 was ejected from his vehicle after a tire blowout, causing the car to hit a guardrail and flip.
- PFC-19 was ejected while riding as a passenger in the rear seat of a friend's car. In the early morning hours, the driver fell asleep at the wheel, veered off the highway, struck a guardrail, and slid down an embankment.
- SSG-23 attempted to pass another vehicle, lost control of his motorcycle, went off the road, and flipped approximately four times. Soldier had his motorcycle only 2 months prior to accident and had not attended a motorcycle safety course.
- PFC-21 fell asleep at the wheel while driving home from work in the afternoon.
- SPC-25 and PFC-19 were both killed when their vehicle, traveling at a high rate of speed, collided with the backend of a slower moving truck.
- SSG-29 was on her way to PT formation and attempted to cross a water-covered bridge, but her vehicle was swept into the creek by the current. Soldier subsequently drowned in the swiftly flowing water after exiting the vehicle.
- SPC-24 was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the rear seat of a friend's car. In the early morning hours, the driver fell asleep at the wheel, veered off the side of the road, and overturned four times. Driver and front passenger wore seatbelts and survived.
- SPC-23 exited his vehicle at a congested intersection and was hit by a civilian POV.
- SPC-28 and SPC-24 were fatally injured when their vehicle drifted into oncoming traffic and collided head-on. They were returning from a fishing trip.
- SSG-40 was traveling at a high rate of speed on his motorcycle when he missed a sharp turn and ran into a telephone pole.
- PFC-19 was traveling at too great a speed around an "S" curve and lost control of the vehicle.
- PV2-25 was driving in the wrong direction on a one-way street when he swerved to avoid hitting an oncoming car and subsequently flipped his vehicle. Both occupants, not wearing seatbelts, were ejected through the windshield.
- SPC-21 was a passenger in a vehicle when the driver lost control, went off the road, and flipped. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.
- SSG-35 was thrown off a four-wheeler and run over by it after attempting to cross a ditch.
- SGT-29 lost control of his motorcycle and veered off the highway while attempting to negotiate a sharp turn.
- PFC-22 fell asleep, lost control of his vehicle, hit a guardrail, and then rolled four to five times.



- SGT-25 crashed his motorcycle into a vehicle attempting to turn at an intersection.
- MSG-37 and family were fatally injured when his vehicle was hit from the rear by a semi tractor-trailer truck while stopped at a traffic light.
- SPC-25 ran off the road, struck a drainage ditch, then rolled several times. Soldier was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected.
- PVT-24 crossed the median and collided into oncoming traffic.
- PV2-20 ran off the road, oversteered, hit a culvert, and was vaulted into the oncoming traffic lane where he was hit by another vehicle.
- PVT-21 was a passenger in a vehicle that struck an oncoming car while attempting to pass.
- SGT-32 was traveling at an excessive rate of speed on his motorcycle when he failed to successfully negotiate a bend in the road and subsequently skidded into a trash dumpster.
- SPC-24 lost control of his vehicle while attempting to drive and consume a meal at the same time. The vehicle ran off the road and the soldier attempted to guide it back onto the roadway, but overcorrected and spun into oncoming traffic where he was struck by a bus.
- SPC-21 was traveling at a high rate of speed when he lost control, left the roadway, and slid off the opposite side of the road into an embankment and then a tree.
- SSG-38 had his vehicle struck by a semi tractor-trailer truck while attempting to merge into interstate traffic. Passenger also expired.
- SGT-28 was traveling at a high rate of speed on his motorcycle when he rounded a corner, lost control, and hit an embankment.

**NO NO**  
**HELMET SEATBELT**  
**3 29**

● CW4-40 was involved in a 40-car pileup that resulted in at least six deaths and multiple injuries while driving during a dust storm. Winds were blowing between 80-100 mph dropping visibility to zero.

● PFC-20 was killed while riding as a passenger in the back seat of a car. Vehicle left the roadway and struck an unknown object. Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and was thrown through the windshield. Speed, alcohol, and the lack of a license appeared to be contributing factors. ♦

## Food For Thought...

**A**s an M1A1 Abrams tank crewmember, are you less likely than other soldiers of your same age and grade to be involved in a POV accident because you're more reliable, more disciplined, and more mature? Or are your chances of a POV accident actually higher than average because you're an Abrams crewmember?

Maybe the fact that the Army trusts you with responsibility for high-cost tanks and priceless personnel makes you take seemingly lesser responsibilities for granted. Maybe that

car or truck or motorcycle doesn't seem like too big a deal when you've just crawled out of a Bradley or a high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV).

Statistically speaking, that Abrams, Bradley or HMMWV is not what's going to get you killed. You're much more likely to die in your POV. That being the case, why aren't we applying risk management during our off-duty time as we do while we're on-duty? It should be a continuous process! ♦

**Think about it...**